

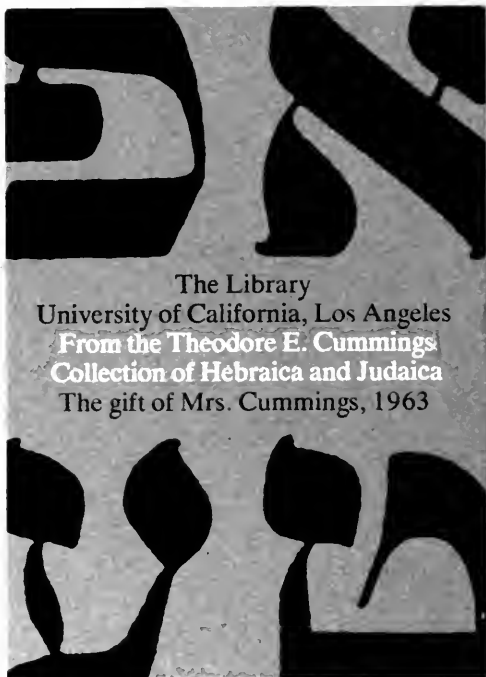
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INITIATION
OF YOUTH

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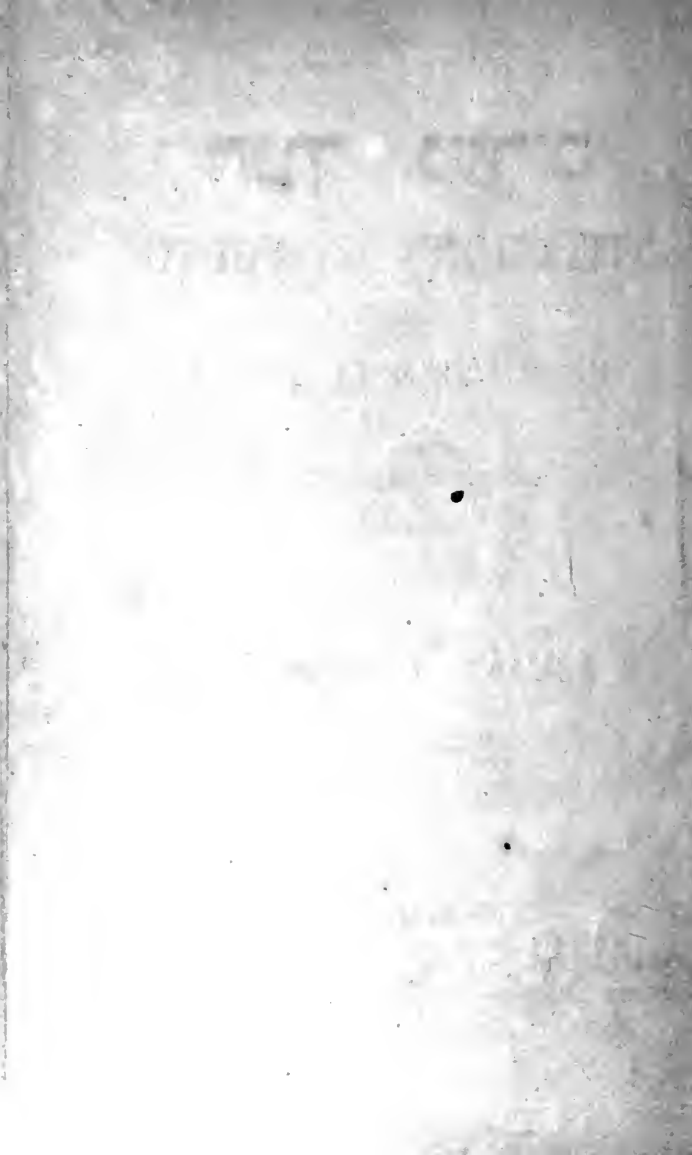
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חנוך נערים

INITIATION OF YOUTH,

CONTAINING

THE PRINCIPLES OF JUDAISM,

ADAPTED

FOR THE PERIOD OF CONFIRMATION,

ARRANGED IN

A CATECHETICAL FORM.

BY

THE REV. B. H. ASCHER.

ואתחלפה בחכמה כי פקדוך דרשתי :

And I will walk at liberty: For I searched into thy precepts,—*Psalms, cxix. 45.*

London :

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TO
DENIS M. SAMUEL, ESQ.,

WARDEN OF THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE

AS A
GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR HIS
UNCEASING PATRONAGE
AND UNREMITTING KINDNESS,

THIS WORK
IS HUMBLY DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION,
WITH UNFEIGNED AND HEARTFELT RESPECT,
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AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

THE immense importance of education is already sufficiently acknowledged. It is the superior endowment which enables the man to play his part in the world—the only inexhaustible store for all time and climates. Education confers honors on mankind, and constitutes the *animus* of physical and spiritual happiness. It is a matter of course, that not only the principles of revealed religion must not be lost sight of, but they must even precede all other sciences and become the centre of all knowledge —“ראשית חכמה יראת ה'”—“The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord.”—(*Psalm* cxi. 10.) But moral education and religion are most intimately connected; they always go hand in hand, and can never be separated; their relation is exactly similar to that which the blossom bears to the fruit. Useless, as the

blossom may be considered which produces no fruit, so is it with religion that effects no morality; and, as fruits cannot be expected without blossom, thus we never can see morality without religion—

רבי אלעזר בן עזריה אומר אם אין תורה אין
דרך ארץ אם אין דרך ארץ אין תורה אם אין
חכמה אין יראה אם אין יראה אין חכמה

Rabbi Eleazer ben Azaryah said—"If there be no knowledge of the law, there can be no correct worldly conduct, and if there be no correct worldly conduct; there is certainly no law; if there be no wisdom, there is no fear of God; and if there be no fear, there is no wisdom." (Chapters of the Fathers, or the Ethics, chapter iii. §. 17.) Numerous works have therefore been written on the important subject of religious education and on that of confirmation. Several school books treating on the principles of our sacred creed, have lately appeared in diverse languages; so that a mere catalogue of the names of the authors who have written on this subject, with the titles of their works, would almost occupy the whole space of the scanty manual which I venture to lay

before the indulgent public; to claim originality would, therefore, be most presumptuous and arrogant. Useful as the above productions may be, I have still found myself compelled to deviate from their methods. Some appear to me too prolix and too minute, whilst others I consider have treated many important objects with too much indifference. This manual has not been written for idle vanity, or to share the *poor* laurels of the numerous religious authors; but it had its origin during a course of tuition and conversation on religious matters with my pupils and friends, who seemed desirous that I should put my ideas into a succinct form. I have also especially designed it for the use of my young brethren at the period of their confirmation. They will, I trust, through the medium of my publication, obtain a clear idea of God and of his sacred and immutable law, calculated to procure for man temporal happiness and celestial salvation—they will obtain, I hope, as much knowledge of the religion of their ancestors as Judaism can demand of its attached and sincere votaries; and will, if they study ^t attentively, become so strongly imbued with the true spirit of

the law, as to pursue its sacred and soul refreshing study even in manhood and old age.

The study of our sacred law and religion should be extended even to that period of life, when the student is past the period of youth and about to enter manhood—when he will properly know how to distinguish good from evil, and will be sufficiently guarded against gainsayers, scoffers, seductions, and allurements. It is a mistaken notion with parents who think that they have performed their duty by merely sending children to school, or giving them private education to the age of **בר מצוה** (thirteen years), after which time they leave their offspring to their own will, to follow their own guidance, and to imagine, as the carelessness of the parents sometimes proves, that their children are entirely out of their power and guardianship. The evil consequences arising from this, are too obvious to be overlooked. However clearly and correctly the “*confirmed*”—**בר מצוה** may have acquitted himself in reading the **פרשה** (a portion of the weekly lesson read on Sabbath in the Synagogue), nay, even the whole **סדרה** (weekly

lesson), however beautifully he may have chaunted the *הפטר* (the lesson of the Prophets), which is too often but mechanically performed, yet this is not sufficient to render the Bar Mitsva, a good and pious Jew and a useful member of society. He must be made acquainted with the duties he owes to God, and the respect he ought to show for the law of God and its teachers, to his king on earth, to his fatherland, and to man in general; in a word, he ought to know how to become a pious and genuine Jew in *thought and deed*, a good man and a useful citizen.

As regards the ceremonial observances and the festivals,* of which I could not treat in my scanty limit, I trust the teacher will find no difficulty in imparting a knowledge of them in an easy manner, from the positive biblical facts on which they are grounded. Indeed, the Bible should never be laid aside by the teacher, who will progressively impress its divine precepts on the minds of his pupils, and which ought, ex-

* For a full illustration on this subject I refer the reader to Dr. Raphall's "Festivals of the Lord."

clusively, to be left to his discretion. The teacher, in this instance, will discover the capacity of the pupil entrusted to his care, and will therefore know how to fashion the instruction.

I conclude with the remark that I willingly resign the merit of being original; I freely disclaim every novelty, desiring to be looked upon only as the compiler and editor of old truths.

May, therefore, this insignificant attempt contribute its mite to the improvement of religious instruction. Too little has yet been done in this field, though it is well known that true salvation can only be expected from a piously religious education; while, without it, all systems of improvement must prove vain and deficient.

17, *Bury Street, St. Mary Axe,*
12th of Tebeth, 5610 A.M.

INITIATION OF YOUTH.

Q. What are you my young friend?

A. I am a human being, like my fellow creatures.

Q. Of what nation are you?

A. By birth, an Englishman; in faith, a Hebrew.

Q. What are your duties as a man?

A. To regulate my life according to the principles laid down by reason.*

* כי מציאות המפעל יורה על המצא פעלו כמו שאמר הנביא : שאו מרום עיניכם וראו מי ברא אלה • ולכן התעסקו הפילוסופים במצב הנמצאות וסדורם ומציאם , כי עם החבוננות בהם יודע ממצאם • אבל לדעת עצם אמתת מציאותו לא יוכל השכל כאשר יחלש העין בהבטתו נגד אור השמש , כי השכל הוא דבר נמצא בתכלית , לא יוכל להשיג אמתת מי שאין לו תכלית •

“ The existence of the master may be perceived from his work, as the prophet says, ‘ Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things.’ And for this reason have the philosophers applied themselves to the study of nature, its regulation, and its maker. For by reflecting on nature we may perceive its author; but to know the foundation of the truth of his existence, all human knowledge will prove deficient, just as we cannot endure to gaze steadfastly at the bright sun. Limited human reason will never be able to acquire unlimited truth.”—*Maamar Haskeil, by Raban.*

Q. By what means have you acquired your faith as a Jew?

A. By the dictates of revelation, which have convinced me of the truth of the Jewish religion.

Q. What is the first dogma of the Jewish religion?

A. The belief in the Supreme, Infinite and most perfect Being, the First Cause, the Creator, Governor and Supporter of the universe, who vouchsafed to reveal himself to my ancestors, and to give to them his commandments.

Q. Is there in the Jewish religion a command to believe in that religion?*

A. No, a belief can never be enjoined by a precept—it is a voluntary assent of the mind.†

* Vide Cosri, B. I., p. 5 ; and Aben Ezra on the Decalogue.

† The first and most important of all religious truths was not imposed upon us by its Divine giver as a blind belief. This may be seen from the original expression אֱמוּנָה which is generally rendered by “faith,” but in reality merely signifies “trust,” based on knowledge. As we read of Abraham, after God had brought him abroad, and had ordered him to lift up his eyes towards heaven, and tell the stars, scripture says וַאֲבִרָם בָּה' וַיִּחְשְׁבֶהּ לוֹ צְדָקָה “He (Abraham) trusted in the Lord, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”—(Gen. xv. 6.) Thus we discover the Creator in creation ; God in his Divine structure. For this reason, we find in the sacred volume a laconic but most impressive narration of the wonderful creation, which gives an ample field for investigation to the inquiring mind. “The heavens declare the glory of God, &c.”

A man either believes, and needs not to be enjoined to do so; or, he believes not, and all directions to incline him to believe are useless.

Q. But why are we commanded to love God, since our feelings cannot be commanded?

A. True; love cannot be commanded to our feelings, but it may be to our reason. For a proper conception and a true knowledge of God and his attributes, must instil into us an inclination to follow his precepts, without any expectation either of temporal or spiritual reward.

Q. Why was love towards God commanded in the last book of Moses?

A. Because this heavenly love is only to be expected after man has attained a mature and perfect idea of his Maker. Since we are fully convinced that God, the creator of every thing, supports and upholds all, rules over the whole universe, and provides

—(*Psalm* xix. 2.) “Look well at the work, and thou art sure to see its master. Reflect on its wonderful perfection, and thou wilt be enabled to form a true idea of the most perfect God, who merely spake and it was done, who but commanded and it stood firm.”—(*Psalm* xxxiii. 9.) Vide *Religion & Judaism*, by R. C. Hurwitz, page 36.

for all creatures, we, at the same time, obviously perceive, that his loving-kindness is extended towards every being; and this salutary knowledge cannot fail to awaken within us humanity, love, and adoration for God, whom we must regard as our Creator, Protector, and Benefactor. This doctrine will also enable us gladly to appreciate the true dogmas of our sacred faith, the basis of which is love towards God and man. For love cannot be commanded:* it may be proved as a duty; but,

* I must refer the reader to a passage of our great philosopher and divine Maimonides in corroboration of this opinion:
האל הנכבד והנורא הזה מצוה לאהבו וליראה אותו שנאמר את ה' אלהיך חירא והאד הוא הדרך לאהבתו ויראתו? בשעה שיתבונן במעשיו ויברואיו הנפלאים הגדולים, ויראה מהם חנמתו שאין לה סוף ולא קץ, מיד הוא אהב ומשבח ומשאר ומתאווה האהה גדולה לידע הסם הגדול, כמו שאמר דוד: צמאה נפשי לאלהים לאל חי' וכשמחשב בדברים האלו עצמן, מיד הוא נרתע לאחריו ויפחד, ויודע שהוא בריה קטנה ששלח אפילה, שומרת ברעת קלה מעומדה לפני המים רעות, כמו שאמר דוד: כי אראה שסוף מעשה אצבעותיך, ירח וכוכבים אשר כוננה, מה אנוש כי תוכרנו יד החזקה ח'א ה' יסדו התורה פרק ב' הל' א—ב

“Man is in duty bound,” says that great teacher, “to fear and love the most glorious and tremendous God;” for Scripture says, “And thou shalt love the Eternal thy God.”—(*Deut.* vi. 5.) But how are we to attain that degree of love and adoration? When man directs his reflections to the great and wonderful works and creatures of God, and learns from them His infinite and incomprehensible wisdom, he will soon feel love for that God, and will then proceed to adore and praise Him, and will indefatigably strive to know this great God; he will exclaim with David, “My soul longeth for God, for the living God.”—(*Psalms* xlii. 2.) And the more man indulges in these solemn reflections, the more he will tremblingly shrink

if it does not already exist within our heart, no behest whatever will be able to instil that heavenly spark—love. Man can only love freely.

Q. What is the nature of your belief in the revealed Jewish religion?

A. I imbibe the knowledge of God through my religion, to which I give assent through my reason.

Q. Are we allowed in matters of religion to have recourse to reason?

A. We are not only allowed in matters of religion and faith to consult reason, but we are, moreover, expressly commanded to do so. Thus did our royal Psalmist, in his last will to the wisest of all kings (who was then yet a tender youth) say, “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou

within himself at the thought, how little, how insignificant, how perplexing his knowledge is when compared with that of the most perfect and Omniscient God.—*Yad Hachezahak*, vol. 1. *Yesodei Hatorah*—chap. ii. 1—2.

forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.”—(1 *Chronicles*, xxviii, 9.) The expression, “KNOW THOU THE GOD OF THY FATHERS,” means, that he (Solomon) should be fully convinced, that his heart should be thoroughly impressed with the truth of the existence of the only true God,* the Creator of the universe, who is omnipotent, unlimited, unrestricted, without beginning and without end, without similitude, incorporeal, omnipresent, omniscient, immutable: yea, the fountain of perfection, mercy, and kindness. This is the chief doctrine which religion teaches us mortals. Happy! thrice happy, are those

* דע אתה המציין במאמרי זה, כי ההאמנה אינה העניין הנאמר בפה, אבל העניין המצוייר בנפש, כשיאמינו בו שהוא כמו שיצויר, ואם יספיק לך מן הדעות האמתיות או הנחשבות אמתים אצלך, כשתספרם במאמר מבלתי שחצירם, ותאמין בהם, כ"ש שתבקש מהם האמת, הוא קל מאוד, כמו שהמצא רבים מן הפתאים ישמרו אמונות לא יצוירו להם ענין בשום פנים. מורה נבוכים חלק א' פ' ג'

Maimonides is also of this opinion, for he plainly says, in his unrivalled work *Moreh Nebuchim*, vol. 1, chap. 50, “Know thou, attentive reader, that faith is not constituted by the utterance of the lips, but solely by the conception formed thereof in our soul, inasmuch as we are fully persuaded to believe that the object is really as represented to our mind. But shouldst thou be satisfied with the mere declaration of some truisms, or what thou thinkest to be true, and shouldst thou believe them, without having the slightest conception of them, or without searching into their real foundation, this would be an easy but a useless task. Even the most simple may be the means of preserving a creed of which he has not the slightest conception.”

who have such feelings and thoughts. Religion, as we see, therefore, lays claim on mind and heart, on our reason and our senses; and this is one of the differences which distinguishes the knowledge of religion from that of other sciences. In these, simple knowledge (and not necessarily the application of it) is the object of the student; but in matters of religion, not only is the *knowledge* of its doctrines necessary, but it is also most essential to *feel* its soul-reviving truths within our hearts, to carry them into effect, and to make use of them in life. "To seek God," says one of the most ingenious authors, "requires both our head and heart."* If these two principal agents be separated, the heart will lead to superstition, and the head to infidelity. True belief, however, proceeding from our reason, influences the mind, cheers the soul, cherishes the heart, and stimulates man to actions, which are sure to lead him on the way

* Similarly expressed by Rabbi Behayah, the author of the well-known work חובות הלבבות—(The Duties of the Heart).
וידעתי דעת ברוחה כי חובות האברים לא השלמנה כי ברצון הלב וחשף
הנפש למשותה.

"We know perfectly that the external duties (of man) can only be completed by the will of the heart and the desire of the soul to do them."—*Hobath Halebaboth, Preface.*

to happiness and salvation; as sung by the divine and royal Bard—"The law of the Lord is perfect, comforting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."—[*Psalm xix.* 7, 8.] But, as I said, we must be thoroughly pervaded by the truths of religion, if we expect to partake of its eternal salvation.

Q. Could your unassisted reason alone, without any revelation, give you the true knowledge of God?

A. I am not wiser than millions of other men, who by their mere human reason have not* known the true God; and in their endeavour to discover the mystery of the origin of the world, have fallen into the most absurd and superstitious opinions. It is true, that the contemplation of nature ought to convince man of the existence of that omnipotent Being, who endures through eternity, who fills immensity, who has distributed innumerable systems of material worlds through

* Vide Cosri, Book I., §. 13.

the profundity of space, and has replenished them all with percipient beings, capable of enjoying the happiness which his goodness has wisely allotted to their respective stations; that this self-existent first-cause of all beings, whom no language can describe, no thought can comprehend, is alone worthy of our supreme adoration. "O Lord how excellent is thy name on earth!" says King David, "who hast set thy glory above the heavens."—[*Psalm* viii. 1.] Yet, strange to say, the generality of men were never enabled by the light of reason either to elevate their nature in the knowledge of God, or to regulate their manners in morality. In order to know the real genius of natural men, and how far that genius can proceed in the investigation or enforcement of moral duties, it would be necessary to consult the manners and writings of those who never heard of the dispensation contained in the Bible, and of those manifestations which God vouchsafed to Adam and to the patriarchs of old. It would be difficult to find anywhere a people entirely destitute of some traditionary notions concerning a Deity, and of traditionary fears and expectations of

another life. Yet it is a truth which cannot be denied, that although the generality of mankind have always had some faint conception of God, it has never been efficacious either to afford to them that joy, happiness, and consolation, which are the allotments of the believer in the true and only God of Israel; to elevate their mind above the scanty pittance of morality, necessarily enforced by civil legislation; or by resisting the solicitations and allurements of sense, to enable them to escape unspotted from the licentious manners of the world.

Q. Is the mere belief in the existence of the Supreme Being sufficient to render man religiously pious and happy?

A. No! in order to enjoy the blessedness of the belief in God, we must also believe that he is our God.

Q. What do you understand by the words, "his being our God"?

A. I do not mean that my relation to that incomprehensible God is nearer or higher than that of any other human being;* but I mean to

* מעיד אני עלי שמים וארץ; בין ישראל בין נכרי: בין איש או אשה
 צדו או שפחה, הכל לפי המעשה שהוא עושה, כן רוח הקדש טורח עליו
 "Heaven and earth I call for witness that be it Jew or pagan,

express, that the true belief in God, which is able to purify the heart of man, and to lead him to morality and holiness, consists in his conviction; that this great God, the Creator of the heavens and their hosts, deigns to look upon us here below; deigns to accept our prayers and adoration—is cognizant of all our acts, thoughts, and wants; and had no other design in calling us into existence from nothing, than to show us his infinite goodness and mercy.

Q. How would you briefly express the fundamental points of your religion?

A. By the following three truths, which all reasonable men admit, are necessary and proper to be known, viz:—

I.—The existence of God.

II.—Divine revelation.

III.—Reward and punishment, or Divine providence,* which also includes the immortality of the soul.

man or woman, slave or handmaid, every one, according to the virtue of his deeds may acquire holy inspiration.”—(Tana debei Eliah, chap. 9.)

ומה ששאלת על האמות וכו’

“The pious of all nations have a portion in futurity.”—Maimonides’s Epistle to Rabbi Hisdai (Edit. Amstor, page 5.

* Vide Ikarim, book I, chap. 10.

These are the fundamental points of the Jewish religion, and have been, through its medium, imparted to many other nations. Whether these three truths are taught us by God beyond the possibility of error concerning any of them, let the history of philosophy, idolatry, and superstition in all ages and countries determine. Wherever there is a Jew on the surface of the earth, his testimony and conduct ought to connect the present with the beginning of all time. He *now* believes, and declares that all his progenitors have constantly believed, the history contained in the book of Moses to be a true history; he *now* obeys the laws which God deigned to give to Moses above three thousand years ago; he *now* practices the circumcision which God enjoined on Abraham; he *now* observes the passover, in commemoration of the mercy vouchsafed to his nation, when God destroyed the first-born throughout the land of Egypt; he *now* keeps holy the seventh day, on which God rested from the works of Creation; he *now* binds round his hand and head the phylacteries as commanded by Moses,

and explained in the oral law, which was verbally transmitted from father to son, and without which the written law would have been to us, in many passages, as a sealed letter.* When nations institute rites to preserve the memory of great events, the uniform observance of those rites authorizes us to admit the certainty of the facts; why then should we hesitate to admit the certainty of all the events related in the book of Moses?† *Adam* was co-existent with *Methuselah* two hundred and forty years; *Methuselah* with *Shem*, the son of *Noah*, ninety-eight years; and *Shem* with *Abraham* one hundred and fifty years. What apprehension can we reasonably entertain to accept the great facts of the creation of the world—the deluge—the replenishing of the world

* Similarly expressed in the following words by an eminent Hebrew divine and philosopher :

והשגרים שפתחם הבורא לדעת תורתו ודתי הם שלשה : האחד השכל הנצל מכל פגע ; והב' פדה שהוא מוחש ; והג' מה שקבלנו מקדמוני שקבלו מן הנביאים ע"ה ; הקדמה לחובות הלגבות .

“Three gates,” says the pious author of the *Hoboth Halebaboth*, “has the Creator opened for man, by which he may obtain the knowledge of his (God’s) doctrines. 1. Reason, which delivers man from every attack (gainsaying). 2. The physical senses of nature ; and 3. Traditions, which are received from our ancestors, who obtained them from the prophets.”—*Preface*.

† Vide Cosri, Book I., secs. 43, 45, 47—54.

by the descendants of Noah, and the whole history of the Jewish theocracy, when we accept with less hesitation all other transactions of antiquity by the authority of history? Moreover, were there in the narration any falsehood which Moses intended to impose upon the credulity of his contemporaries, could we for a moment doubt that Korah and his followers would have hesitated publicly to charge Moses with it, and thus at once to have repudiated the authority of his history?

Q. Your religion, you say, is founded on the testimony of your people; who, from the beginning until now, have transmitted it to their children; and have thus, generation after generation, most solemnly testified their conviction of its truth. Now, as it is altogether unnatural that fathers should willingly deceive their children, continually telling them in life and in death, extraordinary histories connected with their religion, why do you reject other systems of creed which are likewise confirmed by the testimony of honest fathers to their children?

A. The difference is—first, as to the authority of our religion, which is founded on the testimony

of an entire nation, who were eye-witnesses* to the stupendous wonders which could not possibly

* The Israelites had the honor and fortune to witness that great Miracle—revelation, with their own eyes. The Supreme Being deigned to reveal his glory and sacred will in a manner intelligible to mankind, by word and letter, and sanctified these doctrines by most supernatural miracles. And the Israelites, hundreds of thousands in number, were eye-witnesses of this glorious event. כִּי לֹא מִרְאשׁ בְּחֵרַר דְּבִרְתִּי “I have not spoken in secret from the beginning.”—(*Isaiah* xlviii. 16.) To them was the word of God directed, to them alone was delivered the sacred volume, destined gradually to produce its sound and moral influence on mankind. “The experience of many centuries,” says the immortal Mendelssohn, in his renowned *Jerusalem*, “fully shows, that this divine instructive book has already become the source of salutary knowledge to the greatest part of the human species, from which they derive new notions. The more we investigate and search into this sacred book, the more we will be amazed at the profundity and depth of knowledge which lie hidden therein; and though it cannot be denied that at the first view truth is represented in a most simple garb, so as not to engage our further attention, yet the nearer we advance to it, the more pure, the more meek, and the more anxious our look becomes, the more it develops its divine beauty, which is only covered with a thin veil, in order that it might not be profaned by the gaze of the ungodly eyes.” אמר ר' שמעון בן יוחאי, ווי לההוא בר נש דאמר אורייתא אחיא לחואי כסורין בעלמא ומילי דהדינא.

“‘Woe to the son of man,’ says Rabbi Simon, son of Jochai, ‘who says that holy writ shows only general and profane historical facts.’”—(*Medrash Hane-elam*); compare, also, *Ekeidath Yetshak*, by Rabbi Isaac Aramah.—*Gate*, vii. p. 20.

Thus we see the Israelites of yore were completely convinced of the truth of those events. It was Israel that propagated uninterruptedly those truths from generation to generation, from father to son, from teacher to disciple, for thousands of years, (Vide the chapter of the Father.—*Chap. I.*, sec. 1.) as sung by the Royal Bard, “O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.”—(*Psalms* xlv. 1.)—compare “*Religion und Judenthum*,” by R. C. Hurwitz, page 16.

have been wrought by human agency, but must have proceeded from the great author of the universe himself. For the God who speaks to us in his laws, does not appear to us as an unknown being, as a Being of whom we have never heard, who is merely a God of to-day or yesterday. Our God never imposed upon us precepts contrary to human reason, and which we are obliged to perform blindly or senselessly. This is not required by the sacred religion to which we are attached. In our religion we hear the voice of a God whose Divine providence and loving-kindness is well known; a God who has created the heavens and earth—a God who rules over every thing—a God whom we perceive in all nature—a God who lives in us, supports us, and directs us—and who is always “nigh to those who call upon him in truth.”—(*Ps.* cxlv. 18.) A God who delivered our ancestors from Egyptian slavery; who revealed himself on Sinai to give to our ancestors his sacred immutable law—and that, as has already been stated, in the presence of an entire nation. And what law has he (God) bestowed upon us? Not a law which cannot be understood, nor a law foreign

to human nature, and which lies very far from us. No; it is a law that lives in us—a law given to mortals, and consequently to be appreciated by them; and can there be a thing more natural than that the Almighty Creator, who formed man for happiness, both terrestrial and celestial, should in his merciful revelation have provided him with the means of obtaining it? Hence our steadfast adherence to the immutable law of Moses without exception. We neither attempt to proselytise nor to interfere with the religious opinions of others. We do not even inquire what those opinions are, so long as they inculcate charity, brotherly love, and universal fellowship. We do not therefore repudiate their religion as regards its followers, but as regards ourselves. So far as we are concerned, we respect every religious system which has the worship of God and the practice of virtue for its basis. We are not called on to judge as to the validity or invalidity of the circumstances on which other religions are founded. Nay more, we even go so far as to acknowledge their efficacy

* The law was not given to angels. לא נתנה תורה למלאכי השרת.

for everlasting salvation to others.* But to us Judaism, with all its restrictions and all its prescriptions, is indispensably necessary. It is true we are sometimes tempted to ask, when we see man persecuted for religion's sake, whether the teachers of other religions could have inculcated the doctrines which sanction intolerance, cruelty, and even bloodshed? But to speak in the language of holy writ—"thus far we will go and no farther."

Q. Is it reasonable to believe that the Almighty God should at sundry times, and in divers instances, have suspended the laws of nature,† which he had established? that he should have visited, in an extraordinary manner, this little globe, this atom of the universe, and by signs and wonders have made a revelation of his will to an insignificant being like man? that he should have chosen to himself a parti-

* חסדי אומות העולם יש להם חלק לעולם הבא .

The pious of all nations have a claim on futurity.

† וישב הים לאיתנו מלמד שהתנה הקב"ה הנאי עם מעשה בראשית :

"The Holy One (blessed be He) at the creation of the world, invested nature with the power of being changed at His desire in time of necessity."—(*Bereishith Rabbah, Exodus 21.*)

cular people, that they might witness to the whole world his existence and attributes?

A. By means of my reason I could certainly not have arrived at such conclusions; but what surprises my reason is not at all contrary to it; and it would be very unreasonable if I measured the infinite wisdom of God by the standard of my own faculties. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."—(*Isaiah* lv. 8, 9.) Without my sacred religion I should have been in continual perplexity; I should constantly have asked myself, for what purpose was I born? In what course of actions does the felicity of my nature consist? Am I the *free* author of these reputed actions, or am I a machine incessantly and irresistibly impelled by external causes over which I have no control? Will my existence be terminated by death, or will it be continued beyond it? Will the state of my future existence (and one there surely is) depend on my moral conduct here? All these and other questions of similar

import are answered in my religious belief. I cannot indeed penetrate the profundity of the thoughts of God, but I have a perfect evidence that the Jewish people have been the depositary of the law of God, the instruments in the hand of God for declaring His name through the whole world. It was through this nation that the Egyptians saw the wonders of God. "Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, This is the finger of God."—(*Exod.* viii. 19.) "And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked."—(*Ibid.* ix. 27.) "And the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the presence of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians."—(*Ibid.* xiv. 25.) The Babylonians issued their decree, that none should dare to speak amiss of the God of Israel; that all should fear and tremble before him—"Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve

nor worship any God, except their own God : therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill : because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.”

—(*Daniel* iii. 28, 29.) It is likewise through Israel that many nations of the world have learned to worship the name of God, and to esteem justice and humanity. That we may better judge of the weight of this testimony, let us suppose that God should now manifest himself to us, as we maintain he did to our ancestors in Egypt, in the desert, and in the land of Canaan, and that he should continue these manifestations of himself to our posterity for a thousand years, or more, punishing or rewarding them according as they disobeyed or obeyed his commands. What do you expect would be the effect on the mind and proceedings of our posterity? Do you expect that they would, in the remotest period of time, adhere to their God, and maintain against all opponents the truth of the books in which his dispensations to us and

them had been recorded? Or do you suppose that they would yield to the objections of those, who, not having experienced the same divine government, refuse assent to the testimony of their ancestors? No! they would be to the then surrounding nations what the Jews are in the present day—witnesses of the existence and of the moral government of God, and of the immutability of his law.

Q. Are there any verses in Scripture to be found in support of the immortality of the soul?

A. Though Scripture abounds with incontestible indications in support of this truth; as, for instance, “And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace.”—(*Genesis* xv. 15.) “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.”—(*Numbers* xxiii. 10.) “Ye are children of the Lord your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. For thou art an holy people to the Lord thy God.”—(*Deut.* xiv. 1, 2.) “The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and for evermore.”—(*Psalms* cxxi. 7, 8.)

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.”—(*Eccl. xii. 7*); yet, “revelation,” says a modern divine, “fully supplies all arguments that may be advanced in proof of the immortality of the soul.” Hence the omission of an especial and clear dogma in the Pentateuch containing this doctrine must not surprise the Israelite. What need was there for a legislator to preach immortality, who during his life was forty days and forty nights without requiring physical nourishment? What needs a legislator to teach the existence of a spiritual world, to whom angels were indifferent, and who only panted for the presence of God? What need a people to be taught immortality, that expressed themselves **היום הזה ראינו כי ידבר האלהים את האדם וחי**—“We have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.”—(*Duet. v. 24.*) Indeed the law endowed us with eternal life, as we express in the blessing after the reading of the law **אשר נתן לנו תורת אמת וחי עולם נטע בתוכנו** “Blessed be the Lord, who hath given us a true law, and has planted everlasting life in us.” Who can doubt immortality when al-

ready enjoying it in life,* and feeling the realization of the wish to foretaste the bliss of futurity while living on earth? Thus the sublime boon of immortality was inculcated in the most impressive possible manner. The history of revelation has truly excelled all other dogmas of immortality.†

Q. Which Jewish books do you believe to be invested with Divine authority?

A. The תורה נביאים וכתובים, the Pentateuch, the first and later Prophets, and the Hagiographa, consisting of Twenty-four Books, which altogether we call in Hebrew, תנ"ך, and in English, the Bible.

Q. Are all these books of equal importance and sanctity?

A. No! the most sacred is the Pentateuch, which in itself contains the whole system of the Jewish religion, which is the compendium and summary of all practical morality and holiness, the root of the most eminent virtues, and the means to the most perfect civilization, as may

* Vide Talmud Treatise Berachoth, 17. a.

† Vide Nishmath Chajim by Menasseh Ben Israel, book 1, chap. 6. Also Plessner's חקרי קודש—"Holy Convocations," p. 185.

be inferred from the fact that the Hebrews never possessed more eminent and godly men than at the time of Moses.*

Q. Are the Prophets not so much accredited by the Jews as Moses?

A. Yes, they were as true as Moses, and the whole Jewish people knew them to be the true messengers of God; as, for instance, SAMUEL, of whom it is witnessed—"And all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a *true* prophet of the Lord."—(1 Sam. iii. 20.) But not any of the prophets was in eminence and perfection like Moses, as it is written—"And there arose no prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."—(Deut. xxxiv. 10.)

Q. Are there any other doctrines which are likewise of Divine origin, and what are their names?

A. The oral law, known by the name of tradition, collected in the Mishnah, and explained in the Talmud, generally styled the Guemarah.†

* דור המדבר שהי כולם דור דעה The generation of the wilderness was a generation of knowledge.—(*Yalkut* on 1 Kings, 247, §.28.)

† "The Talmud is a collection of Mosaical traditions היזה למשה מסיני i.e. verbal interpretations of the written law by

These oral or traditional doctrines were transmitted from Moses to Joshua, from Joshua to the elders of his time, who again handed them down to the prophets, and the prophets to the men of the great Synod.

Q. But how are we authorized to ascribe to these laws the name of revelation ?

Moses; of prophetic traditions דברי סופרים i.e. verbal interpretations of, and appendices to the written law; and disputations and discourses between the Jewish high schools, in jurisprudence, laws of marriage and divorce, ordinances in reference to the temple services and sacrifices, laws in reference to the observance of Sabbaths and festivals, and laws in reference to food. Mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, and metaphysics are the four sciences which the Talmud frequently employs to assign a firmer basis to the result of its discussions. Besides the afore-mentioned, there are many discussions and dogmatical sentences based on philosophy. The Agadoth also contains ethics and allegories of a moral and religious tendency, illustrations of obscure biblical passages, interspersed and adorned with beautiful parables, historical facts and tales bearing the stamp of fables, which are, however, of a deep meaning.—(*Jewish Chron.*)

But though the most part of the oral law was collected in the Talmud, after Rabbi Jehudah the Prince had given the permission to do so, yet is not the whole of the Talmud of Divine origin; and the learned scholar who is well versed in the Talmud, will soon know how to distinguish that which belongs to the oral law and that which is merely the offspring of the Talmudists themselves. There are a great many things in the Talmud which are beyond the reach of our deficient capacity; and again, some traditions that never have been written in the Talmud, but are still known by tradition, as the זכור וכולי as expressed by Rabbi *Jacob Tam*, an eminent Talmudist of the middle age.

שלא הכל נכתב בתלמוד שהרי כמה דברים קבלה בדיבור מן משה וחקן השילות וברכות, ודברים הרבה למנהג צניעות ופרישות וכו'

A. Because there were in the above mentioned synods not only several prophets, but also their successors, known by the name of *Tanaaim*, men who continually devoted their time to the study of the law, for no other view than to perfect themselves on earth, and to enjoy the blessing of Divine inspiration.* Moreover, the written law cannot be understood, unless we have recourse to the oral law. Let no one imagine that Scripture alone is sufficient to attain a proper knowledge of our sacred religion; for the student will soon perceive the sources whence our translators and commentators have drawn, and are obliged to draw in that ocean of knowledge—the Talmud, for the elucidation of difficult and obscure passages. The importance of tradition will be proved by the study thereof. Who can read the beautiful similes and metaphors of our Midrashim? Who can read the scientific and profound essays in the Talmud, without admiring the depth of their wisdom, and their purity of thought?

* Vide כתר book the third, secs. 65, 67, where this subject is most philosophically treated; compare also Talmud Treatise Haguiga, fo. 3, a.; and Moreh Nebuchim, vol. 1, chap. 59.

Q. But how are we to proceed in cases where the capacity or circumstances of the student does not enable him to follow the pursuit of Talmudical literature?

A. At all events he ought to be made acquainted with some parts of the *Shulchan Aruch*, אֶרַח חַיִּים “Path of life,” which contains several laws and ceremonies, a book easily understood, and which contains a full extract of the laws of Israel, both written and oral, calculated to lead man to happiness. To show the indispensability of the oral law, I will merely quote one instance, viz.—that of חֲכֵמַת הָעֵבוֹר the science of the primitive calculation of the solar and lunar year, on which depends the fixing of the festivals of the Lord. The written law says: הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רִאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים רִאשׁוֹן הוּא לָכֶם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי “This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.”—*Exodus* xii. 2. But it is never explained which month is to be numbered as the first. Neither is it indicated whether Scripture means the Egyptian, the Chaldaic, the lunar, or solar month.*

* For a full and most minute detail of this much disputed subject,

Q. What was the vocation of the Prophets?

A. Their office was to prophesy future events, to predict good or evil, to admonish nations or individuals to repentance and duty, to strive against idolatry, superstition and vice, to caution the people against calamities which were ready to come upon them for their disobedience, or to console them in their misery with Divine promises of future happiness. They never pretended to have a mission from God to give to the Jews a new law,* or new doctrines; they

I refer the reader to Eben Ezra's Preface to his Commentary on the Pentateuch; to the *Cosri*, Book III., §. 35, and to Rabbi Simon, ben Zemach Duran's *מגן אברהם* (The Shield of the Fathers,) p. 30 b., Edit. Livorna, wherein the *Cosri* is almost literally quoted.

* The verse in Jeremiah, wherein God says, "that days shall arrive when he will make with the house of Judah, and the house of Israel, a new covenant"—(*Jer.* xxxi. 31), is not at all at variance with this opinion, for the prophet never intends to say that the *old* divine law should make room for a *new* one; or even that the old law shall once bear relation to the new as the bud to the blossom, and the blossom to the fruit. "For God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent."—(*Numbers* xxiii. 19). It is the law of Moses which all the prophets stated to be the immutable law of God. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of God shall stand for ever."—(*Isaiah* xl. 8). But what does God mean to renew? It is only the *covenant* which he means to renew. *ברית חדשה* A new covenant is promised by the prophet, but not *חוקה חדשה* a *new law*. Only the conditions of the practice of the

exhorted the people strictly to keep the laws of Moses, by the observance and continual study of which they themselves had attained their most eminent character as prophets. "Only be thou strong and very courageous," said God, after the death of Moses, to Joshua, "that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses, my servant, commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest: this book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and thou shalt have good success."—(*Joshua* i. 7, 8.) Our Royal Psalmist also, before his death, said to his son Solomon, "I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thy-

immutable law of Moses, will be new, but not the law of Moses itself, which we will open with a heart full of devotion and adoration, as said, "I will put my law in their inward part, and write it on the table of their heart;"—(*Ibid*, 32) and which, to speak in the words of our sages, we will out of true and unselfish love towards it, salute daily as a new one.—(Vide Dr. Salomon's Sermon, *Gott will mit Israel einen neuen Bund machen*.) See also Abarbanel on the same.

self a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turn thyself.”—(1 *Kings*, ii. 2, 3.) The religious spirit which pervades the whole Bible is the offspring of the law of God. No book in the world contains more beautifully religious sentences than the book of Psalms; but King David, the author of the most part of that sacred volume, had no other book by which he could have formed his religious character than the law of Moses;* and we hear him continually extolling and praising it as the most invaluable treasure. As for instance, “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.”—(*Psalms* cxix.) “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”—(*Ibid.* 18.) “O how do I love thy

אמר ר' אחא בר חנינא אלמלא חסאו ישראל לא נהן להם אלא חמשה חומשי תורה ושאר דיושע.

* “Rabbi Acha, the son of Haneena, says, ‘If Israel had not sinned, they would only have received the Five Books of Moses and the Book of Joshua.’”—*Treatise Nedarim*, fo. 22.

law, it is my meditation all the day.”—(*Ibid.* 97.)
 “Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight.”—(*Ibid.* 77.) “Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in my affliction.”—(*Ibid.* 92.) “Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they kept not thy law.”—(*Ibid.* 136.) “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.”—(*Ibid.* 165.) The same spirit breathes through all the prophets; and the concluding words of the last prophet are—“Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgment.”—(*Malachi*, iv. 4.)

Q. By what name are the commandments of God distinguished from each other?

A. They have three distinct denominations, viz.:—משפטים, judgments; מצות, commandments; and חקים, statutes.*

* Vide אגרות צפון “Epistles of the North,” by Dr. HIRSCH, who brings all the precepts under the following six heads:—1. חוקים “Laws,” historical, revealed ideas of God, the universe, and Judaism, &c., &c. 2. משפטים “Judgment,” laws between man and man. 3. חקים—“Statutes,” laws to be observed by man towards beings and things inferior to him: for instance—to animals, plants, the earth, &c. &c. 4. מצות

I. Under the first are comprised all laws concerning man and man. They positively and negatively prescribe all civil transactions—all social dealings. They not only enjoin the most strict justice in man's actions towards his fellow-creatures, but they likewise control all his sentiments, and enforce the most tender mercies and practical charity, and teach the most refined human feelings, extending even to the treatment of animals—"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn."—(*Deut.* xxv. 4.) They abhor pride—"The Lord will destroy the house of the proud."—(*Prov.* xv. 25.) "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord."—(*Ibid.* xvi. 5.) "A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit."—(*Ibid.* xxix. 23.) They detest revenge, not only in actions, but also in the heart—"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy

"Precepts" of love and charity towards all mankind, &c. &c. 5. עֲדוּת—"Testimonies," being commemorations to Israel and Judaism, based on facts; and 6. עֲבוּדָה—"Service," to elevate and edify the mind, &c. &c.—(*Epistle* x. page 52.) Compare *Moreh Nebuchim*, vol. iii., chap. 35.

people, but thou shalt love thy *neighbour* as thyself: I am the Lord.”—(*Lev. xix. 17, 18.*)

“Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.”—(*Prov. xxiv. 29.*)

II. The second comprises all religious duties towards God, how to love him above all things, and how to worship and adore him with all our heart and soul.

III. The third contains all ceremonial laws, proper for the Jewish nation alone, as being destined by God to be a priestly kingdom, and a holy nation. Some of these commandments are obligatory on the Jews in every place, (as all precepts of holiness, decency, cleanliness, and forbidden food) ; but some depend on time and place, (as all the ceremonies of sacrifices and the like). In general, the book of Moses contains the most precious knowledge needful to man; it discloses to him the secrets of the creation of the world; it informs him of many chief events of our globe; it narrates to him the origin and history of numerous nations; it guides man to happiness; it teaches him his duty towards God; it does not overtask its precepts of mo-

rality, desiring of man that which exceeds his nature, but on the contrary, it perfects it. This sacred volume teaches him to be most honest in his dealings with his fellow-man, most true and sincere in his social intercourse; it requires nothing of him above his power; but teaches him to perfect his nature according to his human capacity. It says, "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."—(*Deut.* xxx. 11—14). The law of Moses enjoins decency, and purity of manners; it prescribes rules by which man may preserve his soul and body in perfect morality and health. It teaches man that virtue or ungodliness consists either in following or deviating from the divine regulations as taught

by Revelation ; and it so much abhors every unnatural act, that it even enters into details, concerning the diet as regards lawful and unlawful meats, dress, and agricultural labor : as, for instance, “ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby. For I am the Lord your God : ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy.” —[*Levit.* xi. 43—44.] “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment : for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds : lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled. Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together.”—(*Deut.* xxii. 5, 9—11). In a word, this Divine Book bears, in its simple majestic beauty, the very stamp and impress of the Divine Author, the creator of nature.

Q. Are we able to ascribe reasons for all the precepts comprised in those of חקים "statutes?"

A. Though it cannot be denied, as we have already shown, that God, who has bestowed knowledge on man—in fact, that knowledge which distinguishes him from, and elevates him above the brute creation, has especially required of him, to ponder and reflect on the laws which he has given to man for his happiness and salvation; yet this privilege must not be abused. It will prove beneficial to us, as long as we do not trespass over the limited boundaries of our human faculties; but it will become injurious if we advance beyond the sphere of our frail comprehension. Though we may endeavour in the pursuit of our studies to clear up the obscure passages in Scripture—though we may search for the reason on which the ceremonial observances are founded, we are still not authorised, nor can we find reasons for all. In this instance, we must consider all precepts contained in Holy Writ as emanating from one teacher; as flowing from the same source that gave us the laws intelligible to our weak mind, and equally binding upon us. As soon as we doubt

the divinity of one part of Holy Writ, it may be considered as if we had denied the whole. Hence the words of our Royal Psalmist "Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy STATUTES. Then shall I not be ashamed when I investigate all thy COMMANDMENTS."—(*Ps.* cxix. 5, 6.)

Q. What ought to be the sentiments of a Jew towards the professors of other creeds?

A. As the Jewish religion is nothing but a monitor of nature and reason, it cannot possibly prescribe anything adverse to humanity, which would outrage both of them. A religion which extends its charity towards animals* cannot possibly inculcate absurd prejudices, and bid us do violence to our natural feelings, by not extending our charitable sentiments towards all our fellow-men, without any difference. The

אמר ר' יהודה אמר רב אסור לאדם שיאכל קודם שיתן לבהמתו שנאמר ונתתי עשב בשדה בשדך לבהמתך והדר ואכלת ושבעת (ברכות ס' גיטין ס').

* Rabbi Jehuda said, "In the name of Rab, man is prohibited from taking his meals before he provides for the beasts; for we perceive in Scripture, that the Almighty first says, 'I will give grass in the field for thy cattle,' and then, '*thou shalt eat and be satisfied.*' " "*Treati-Guitin, p. 60.*" —*Jewish Chronicle, Vol. 1, No. 22.*

A most charitable consideration is here suggested to men who only care for themselves, and neglect the feeding of animals.

distinctive mark of our religion is wisdom. As the law of God tells us, "For this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations."—(*Deut.* iv. 6.) "Ye shall have one manner of law, as well as for the stranger, as for one of your own country; for I am the Lord your God."—(*Leviticus* xxiv. 22). And could the nations of the world acknowledge the wisdom of our religion, if its precepts were adverse to humanity and the general and universal happiness of man and to his fatherland?

Q. Has the Israelite a fatherland besides Jerusalem?

A. Yes, the country wherein he is bred and born, and in which he has the liberty to practise his religion, and where he is allowed to carry on traffic and trade, and to enjoy all the advantages and protection of the law in common with the citizens of other creeds; this country, the Israelite is bound to acknowledge as his fatherland, to the benefit of which he must do his best to contribute; the Sovereign who rules over this land is (after God) his Sovereign; its laws, so long as they are not contradictory to the Divine

Law, are also the Israelite's laws; and the duties of his fellow citizens are also his duties.

Q. Can the Jew who fully believes in the glorious advent of the Messiah, conscientiously consider his native country as his real fatherland?

A. Yes; for though the pious Israelite continually longs to see the restoration of the Divine glory to Jerusalem, the place which God had deemed it proper to fix for his residence, which, according to the promise of the prophets, will be effected after the destruction of the second temple by the advent of the Messiah, an offspring of the house of David, yet so long as the Messiah does not appear, it is binding upon the Jews to consider the soil of their birth as their fatherland.*

אמר ר' אבין הלוי כל הרוחק את השעה שעה דחיקתו וכל הנדחק כפני השעה שעה שמדת לוי

* "Rabbi Abbin Halevi says, 'he who attempts to forestall time will be oppressed by it, but he who yields to time will ultimately find relief.'"—*Treatise Berachoth*, p. 65.

ירא את ה' בני ומלך עם שונים אל החטין

"Fear the Lord, and the King, my Son, and do not mix with rebels."—*Prov.* xxiv. 21.

שלוש שבועות חשבינן ה'קב"ה את ישראל... שלא ימדדו באומות... ושלא ידחקו את הקץ

"The Holy One, blessed be He, (has, as it were,) adjured Israel not to rebel against the nations amongst whom they live, and not to forestall or force the end of their dispersion."—*Kethuboth*, p. 110.

Q. How can you prove it?

A. This is fully shown from holy writ; when the Israelites were, through their sins, first carried captives to Babylon, and the merciful God sent to them his consoling promise through the prophet Jeremiah, to restore them to their holy land after the expiration of seventy years—

כֹּה אָמַר ה' כִּי לִפִּי מִלֵּאת לְבַבְךָ שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה אֶפְקֹד
אֶתְכֶם לְהָשִׁיב אֲהֶכֶם אֶל הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה . . .

“For thus saith the Lord, after seventy years will be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place.”—(*Jeremiah* xxix. 10.) Yet we hear the prophet exhorting his captive brethren to consider themselves as native citizens of Babylon during those seventy years, as we learn from the letter which he addressed to them—“Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon * * * * *

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel

* * * * * Build ye houses and dwell in them, and plant gardens and eat the fruit of them; take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished; and seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shalt ye have peace.”

—(*Jeremiah* xxix. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7.) If a defined stay of seventy years in a land of captivity, imposed upon the Jews the laws and duties of native citizens, how much more are we at present obliged to consider those countries as our real fatherland wherein we have lived almost 1800 years? being, as we are, entirely unaware how long we shall still continue to remain therein.*

Q. Can you assign a true reason for the strenuous and indefatigable endeavours of the Jews to be placed on an equal footing with their Christian brethren?

* זהו סתכל בשלומה של מלכות "Pray for the welfare of the kingdom."—[Chapters of the Fathers, iii. p. 2.]

A. Israel's wish for a thorough emancipation is not based, as his opponents pretend, on material or worldly advantages to be derived from such an equalization; for this might merely be the portion of a few individuals. Suppose the Jews were to succeed in their just cause of being permitted to occupy offices of honor and rank in the legislative assembly, by which the last barrier of intolerance would be broken down; the material advantage of this success would only fall to the portion of a few individuals, sufficiently prepared with external and endowed with internal and moral means to fulfil the duties of such arduous and responsible offices; and who again must first obtain the reliance, affection, and suffrages of their brethren the legal electors. But the true and immeasurable advantage of a complete emancipation of all the Jews, consists in the public declaration of the state, that there is nothing in Judaism which is calculated to deter its votaries from labouring with truth, honesty, equity, and zeal for the common welfare. So long as the way to legislative offices is barred against the Jews, it will always appear that government

still considers them, so long as they remain faithful to their creed, however loyal, however learned, however honest, as incapacitated from serving their fellow creatures. To throw off such a stigma, the Jews justly exert all their moral efforts.

Q. Are the Jews commanded to convert other nations to Judaism?

A. No! the Jews are destined by God to be a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation; but all men cannot be priests, and all nations need not to become Jews in order to obtain the favor of God, or to be his true worshippers.*

* The Talmudical writers enjoin upon us to treat Christians as our own brethren in every social matter.

ונאמי בתראי כתבו שהנוצרים נקראים לנו אחים ואינם בכלל נכרים כלל :
כשנשם לנו כסילים להנאק יעבץ השונות הרב'ש ס' קי"ם , הנאק ר'
יעקב האנץ בעל עץ חיים על משניות

All the later Gaonim (luminaries in the Jewish law) agree that the Christians are reckoned our own brethren, and are not included in the term *Nachrim* (strangers).

הל אמר מה דמך סני לתבך לא תעביד (שבת פ"ו במה מדליקין ,
Hillel said, "Whatever thou dislikest, do not to thy fellow creature."

ר' עקיבא אמר ואהבת לרעך כמוך זה כלל גדול בתורה וכן עזא אמר
זה ספר תולדות אדם זה כלל גדול בתורה ברכות פ"א

Rabbi Akiba said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself," is the great and general rule of the law." Ben Asai, however, thought the term, "love thy neighbour," did not go far enough; and he said, "This is the book of the generation of *man*," was a still more comprehensive rule, as all *mankind* were included in that expression," as observed in—

Q. Are the Jews obliged to impart, or to give to other nations the knowledge of the true God?

A. Yes! they are bound by their life, and even by their death, to testify to the whole world the absolute unity of God, as the Prophet Isaiah says—"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that it is I: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour."—(*Isaiah* xliii. 9, 10.)

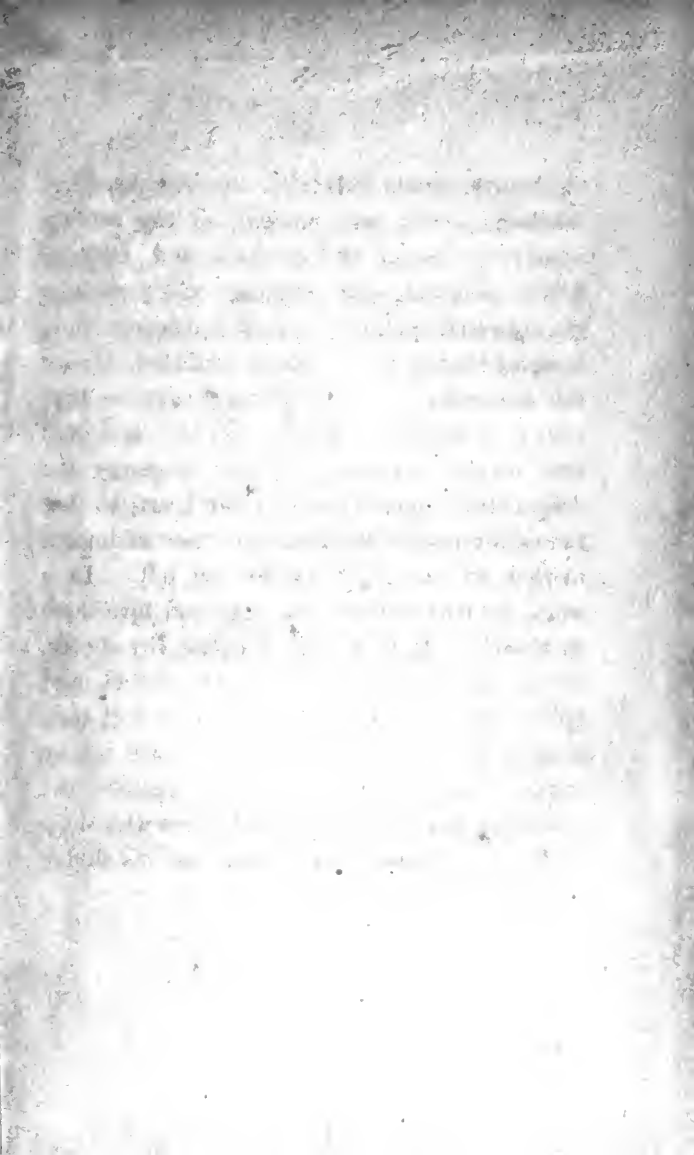
Q. Could you give me a summary of all that you have declared to be the principles of your creed?

A. The pith and animus of my sacred religion is this,—Know thy God, serve him with all

יש לישראל להבדיל מהבלי העולם ולאחוז בזהותו של הקב"ה שהוא אמת, ושלא לשקר לא לישראל ולא לאינו ישראל ולא להטעותם בשום ענין שנאמר שארית ישראל לא יעשו עולה (סמ"ג רבנו הגדול ר' משה מרדכי)

It is incumbent on the Israelite to withdraw from the vanities of the world, and to adhere to the attribute of the Holy One, blessed be He, which is *truth*, not to tell falsehood either to an Israelite or to a non-Israelite, and not to deceive him (the non-Israelite) in any way whatever; for it is said in Scripture, "The remnant of Israel shall do no injustice."—*Jewish Chronicle*, Vol. 1, No. 22. Compare also Plessner's "Religions-Unterricht." p. 263.

thy heart; remain faithful to the religion of thy ancestors to the last moments of thy earthly existence. Keep the Sabbath and festivals holy; pray to God evening and morning; guard thyself against hypocrisy and superstition. Respect the teachers of the word of God. Honor the Sovereign, love thy fellow citizens as thyself, be obedient to the laws of the land and true to thy fatherland. Study diligently the divine laws, engrave them on thy heart, so that thou shalt not deviate from their commandments neither to the right nor to the left. In a word, be true to God and man, and love them as thyself. If thou thus fulfillest thy duties, then thou shalt be happy in this world, and blessed in that to come. Thy virtue will then precede thee, and the glory of God will be thy reward; and at the time of resurrection, the Almighty will awaken thee with those who sleep in dust, and cause thee to feast on his divine presence. Amen.



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